

Dear my fellow Michiganians and Americans at large,

Name is Lagu Joseph Rekpe, I came to the United States and Michigan in practical 15 years ago. I came to this country under the refugee program through St. Vincent Catholic Refugee Services. I was born and raised in Sudan, what is known in the present day as the Republic of South Sudan. I became the US citizen in 2006 by naturalization and held my first passport ever in my life the same year. Currently, I am working and also a student at the Global Institute of Lansing. I am a proud American for the opportunity this country had given me, and shaped my life from the feelings of hopelessness of the refugee camp in Kakuma, Kenya to a positive one today. It is wealth to mention that I am going to touch something a little bit about the **House Concurrent Resolution No. 28**, which leans more towards resettlement of refugees in Michigan.

I do understand that there are a lot of fears in many people at the state level as well as the entire country that immigration is posing threats on our national security. Well, it is all individual point of views. If we may ask ourselves, since the Refugee Resettlement Act of 1980, "How many refugees have the United States brought in so far?" " And how many of them turned to be bad guys or threats to our country?"

The fact is in every nation, society, community, or even family; there are always trouble makers. It cannot be wise to punish the vast innocent population who are suffering from injustice and intimidation because of those few individuals who are coursing trouble to us. Most of refugees who experienced hard lives in their countries of origin, can never act against this great country which offered them the opportunity and the second chance to life. Today, I am the living example. The whole of my 15 years which I had already spend here in Lansing, Michigan, I never had any trouble with law. I respect the laws of this country and will continue to do so.

Yes, I do also agreed that some of those who are causing troubles in this country are immigrants or the descents of immigrants. However, when I watched those events on news, most of those people were whether born here or came to this country at the young age. This made me to ask myself sometimes, "Is there any secret learning or influence somewhere here in this country which is leading those young people to act so brutal like that?" Not to forget, it is not only the immigrants, in this case even our young Americans are also facing similar troubles. For example, in the case of a 22 year old Jared Loughner who shot congresswoman Gabirelle Giffords in Tucson, Arizona, in 2011. He is not immigrant or even second generation of immigrant, and many others are out there too.

In my views, I think Michigan is a great State in the great country in the world. The resolution against resettlement of refugees is not going to fix our safety concerns for good. There are some many good ways which we can find to make new comers or immigrants

understand better, and especially help the young ones from getting in trouble. Trying to teach them and incorporate them in our society in order to feel welcoming and fit in our ways of life.

My fellow citizens, on the event of this House Concurrent Resolution No. 28, let us all take a deep breath and reflect back on who we are and what are the American values which made it to become a great nation in the world. I still believe in the people of Michigan for their hospitality and generosity. It is possible that the Michiganians will still hold onto the American values and come up with good solution to continue help restore the hope of millions of children with their parents around the globe. I also believe that the people of Michigan can continue to make differences in the lives of those who does not have voices in their own countries- to give them voice, hope, and home.

-A home that you can sleep free without worrying about who is going to attack you at night or on the street.

-A home that you cannot hear the sounds of gunshots and the roaring of artilleries.

-A home that is lit by the electric lights not by the flames from the gun barrels and bombs.

- And most importantly, a home that you do not have to worry about what your children will eat tomorrow.

All these are true situations which are happening in the places around the world. For example, places like, Afghanistan, Congo, Iraqi, Libya, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and many others.